Songs of a Sophomore.

BY

W. M. M.

Author of VACATION VERSE.

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INDEX.

	Page.
To McGill	5
McGill's Benefactors	5
McGill Forever	6
Farewell, McGill!	8
The Boys in the Gods	9
"The Wind is Wild on the Mountain Side"	10
Song to the River ———	11
The Change	13
A Voice from the Night	14
Action	15
The Living Christ	16
Evening	16
Love	17
Love Invincible	18
Love Immortal	19
Departed Days	19
The Withered Leaf in June	20
A Song-Ray	20
A Play	21
To Napoleon	21
Youthful Genius	22
First Love	22
Spring	23
Compensation	23
Outremont	24
Hotel Dieu	24

TO McGILL.

McGill, thy graceful edifices rise
Continuous and swift upon the sight,—
Like temples magical upreared by night,—
Preparing eagerly to greet the eyes
Of each returning student with surprise
And joyfulness; as when within the light
Of fair imagination, wonders bright
Of copious fantasy his mind descries.

'Tis Knowledge, the enchantress, who doth raise
These structures for a stronghold, castle wall
And palace court preparing for the days
When she shall hold this mighty land in thrall,
And, throned on truth, with wisdom crowned, shall blaze
And reign,—revered, beloved, and served by all.

McGILL'S BENEFACTORS.

McDonald, Molson, Workman, and McGill,
Smith, Redpath, and the band whose lesser aid
Has reared these halls of learning, ye have made
A monument more lasting than the hill
Whereon they rest. And ye shall blossom still;
Your green perennial greatness ne'er shall fade;
No clouds of baser memories shall shade,
No frosts of harsh ingratitude shall chill.

Let men erect fine mansions as they will,
With largess round enrich the church and state,
But lofty is the function ye fulfil,
Who rear, the youth to teach and educate,
These shrines of Reason and these schools of Skill,
Houses of God!—Let none them desecrate!

McGILL FOREVER.

(Read at a Dinner of the McGill Arts Students in the Athletic Club House on the Evening of February 22nd.)

Now, boys, since all the toasts are drunk, and no one else,
I think,
I bring the wine of song—my brand is safe enough to
drink;
And since you wish it, boys, I'll hoist my organ on the
floor
For Old McGill, for Arts, and for the class of '94.

It's good to have a run out doors, to get away from school;
It's good to have a feast like this and feel one's waistcoat
full;
It's good to look around the board and see each other gay;
It's good to have a kind of thing we don't have every day.

It's good to feel we're students, and it's good to feel we're
boys;
It's good to crack a funny joke; it's good to make a noise;
It's good to know we're part of that—we call it Old McGill,
That men may come and men may go, but it goes onward
still—

* * * * * *

Till this fair city at our feet, Mount Royal's girdling pride,
So dear to us, so dear to all who've crossed its freshening
tide,
Shall cease to lead our nation's line and aid the march of
man,
To raise the cry of Progress and push forward in the van;

Till radiant beauty glides no more among its glittering
throng,
Till lost its charm of eloquence, till hushed its voice of
song,

Till all forgotten are the strains of Reade's affecting lute,
Till Frechette's fadeless laurel dies and Murray's Muse is mute—

Our oak in this great forest shall be the strongest stem,
Our pride the brightest jewel in our country's diadem,
Yea, by our shrines of Reason and by our schools of Skill,
Our name shall ring thro' all the earth, the name of our McGill.

Ay, till the wrong becomes the right, till falsehood stands for truth,
Till gone the hallowing grace of age, the generous heart of youth,
Till love no longer warms the vein nor pity melts the eye,
Till righteous rulers fail to rise and patriots fear to die,

Till native truth and worth and pride, till native glory falls,
Till happiness deserts our homes and honor shuns our halls,
Till Canada forgets her goal, her destiny, her God,
Till hostile host with armëd heel pours havoc on our sod,

Till baneful darkness veils the sun in time's eternal night
True men shall boast with worthy pride to wear the red and white,
To raise our banner, gather round, and stand, as we have stood,
In full and hearty fellowship and noble brotherhood.

While stands Mount Royal our McGill shall stand,
And while McGill stands, Canada. Our land
Shall hither send her best of manhood still
To lift herself and lustre Old McGill.

FAREWELL, McGILL!

(Read at the Graduating Dinner of the Class of '92 by one of its number.)

Farewell, McGill!—farewell, time-honored shade,
The haunt of wisdom and the home of worth!
Ne'er shall thy virtue fail, thy glory fade,
Ne'er shall thy sons forget their noble birth.

Farewell, McGill!—farewell, familiar halls,
Quaint class-rooms, shady pathways, campus green!
'Mong memory's pictures, those thy name recalls
Shall form the fairest and the sweetest scene.

Farewell, McGill!—and ye who for the soil
Of youthful souls, sought out the fount divine,
And drew clear knowledge through the rocks of toil,
And on its face made wisdom's sun to shine!

Farewell, McGill!—the friends of youth, the best,
The sharers in our sorrows and our joys,
Whose strength has stayed, whose fellowship has blessed!—
Farewell, our fellows, brothers!—farewell, boys!

Farewell, McGill!—another word recalls
The mariner e'en as his sail unfurls—
Farewell, bright cheerers of our hearts and halls!—
Farewell, sweet student sisters!—farewell, girls!

THE BOYS IN THE GODS.

Of course, they were noisy and wouldn't keep still,
And oft interrupted the play
With a "What's the matter with Old McGill?"
And a deafening "Hip! hip! hurrah!"
Of course, they were scarcely quite up to the mark,
But what, in good faith, was the odds?
We knew they were students and out on a lark,
And we bore with the boys in the gods.

And the music was ——. Well, I'll admit that the score
Wasn't writ for a classical ear,
And the words were, "We'll Never Get Drunk Any More,"
And "The Son of a Gambolier."
But we listened with manly delight to each song,
And we answered with hearty applauds,
For their voices in unison true were and strong
As the hearts of the boys in the gods.

And the bald-headed gent with the rim of gray hair,
Who ought to know better, you'll say,
Sank listlessly back with a sigh in his chair
And pronounced himself sick of the play.
He declared that the opera singing was cracked,
That the orchestra fellows were frauds,
And he growled from beginning to end of the act
For a song from the boys in the gods.

They have started once more: they are singing of love.
The lady looks up with a blush,
With her fan folded shut in her lithe-fitting glove
And her snowy arm still, on the plush.

She listens until they have finished, and then
With approval unconsciously nods;
And that night in her dreams she heard over again
The song of the boys in the gods.

"THE WIND IS WILD ON THE MOUNTAIN SIDE."

"Come, Fellow, come, let us join in their song,
Their hearts are so joyous, their voices so strong;
With the swell of the chorus the air seems to reel,
And the corridors ring and re-echo the peal."

"But the wind is wild on the mountain side,
And it howls in the roads where the storm-wraiths ride:
Join thou the song while the heart-strings are right,
But *my* spirit will sport with the storm to-night."

"Come, Fellow, come, let your comrades be gay,
But the toil of the night is the fame of the day,
And potent the passions of youth to assuage
Are the song of the poet, the speech of the sage."

"But the wind is wild on the mountain side,
And it howls in the roads where the storm-wraiths ride:
Stare thou at thy book by the dim lamplight,
But *my* spirit will sport with the storm to-night."

"Come, Fellow, come to the feast we have spread,
The viands are fragrant, the goblet is red;
Hark, hark the loud laughter that leaps from the hall,
Haste, haste to the banquet, be glad with us all."

"But the wind is wild on the mountain side,
And it howls in the roads where the storm-wraiths ride:
Drain thou the wine-cup while youth is alight,
But *my* spirit will sport with the storm to-night."

"Come, Fellow, come, let us see them once more,
The yellow-haired sisters, our sweethearts of yore:
Oh! the smile and the tear and the touch and the kiss!
We will weep and embrace them till weary with bliss."

"But the wind is wild on the mountain side,
And it howls in the roads where the storm-wraiths ride:
Meet thou the maiden ere love's early blight,
But *my* spirit will sport with the storm to-night."

SONG TO THE RIVER ———.

(From an Unpublished Play.)

The sun is warm and bright;
The sky is blue and fair;
And the boat is fanned by the breezes light;
And all that I love is there.

Yes, all that I love is there—
Out, out on the waves so free;
With no thought but our mutual love to share,
As free as the waves are we.

Merrily sings the keel
As it cleaves the quivering tide,
And the shy waves playfully steal
And laughingly kiss the side.

And the zephyr makes sport with her hair,
And the sunlight smiles on their glee:
(O my Love, but thy face was fair!
And my love was fair to thee.)

And my eyes drink deep of thine;
Like the waves of the fervid stream,
Greedily lapping the sparkling wine
Of the sunlight's reddening beam.

My rapturous passion they lave,
As liquid with love they expand,
Lighting the amethyst gems of the wave
As they drop from thy glistening hand.

O River, of rivers the king!
O Stream, of my country the pride!
Is royalty not in the spring
That yields thine imperial tide?

Thy ripples I oft have caress'd;
By thy side I have couched in the fern;
And I thought from the throb of thy breast
That thou loved'st me well in return.

And I know that thou loved'st me well;
But thy love is the love of a maid:
On the sand thou art tossing the shell,
On thy bosom the blossom is swayed.

And my boat is brought back to the shore
To the tune of thy wantoning flow,
While thou holdest the keys of the door
That leads to the Lethe below.

THE CHANGE.

My boat is rotting on the shore,
  My sword rusts in the hall,
The steed that oft De Lorri bore
  Now stiffens in the stall.

The timid deer within my park
  Start not at the hunter's horn,
The wild goose, careless as the lark
  That carols in the morn.

No more within my gay chateau
  With worth and beauty bright,
The wheeling dance's dulcet flow
  Leads on the circling night,

—And wherefore should De Lorri grieve,
  And wherefore nothing heed
To launch his boat upon the wave
  Or mount his shining steed?

Wherefore within his gay chateau
  Is mirth no longer heard?
Wherefore undaunted bounds the roe,
  And dips the airy bird?

—"Wherefore"?—The grief and pain are his;
  It is enough for thee
To know that such De Lorri is
  And such will ever be.

A VOICE FROM THE NIGHT.

The mallet is heavy, the iron is dull,
And my wrist is tied with a tyrannous ache.
Pale Demon of Want, is my cup not full,
Thy hellish thirst to slake?

Clink! clink! I hammer and carve;
And the tools seem at work in my echoing brain.
Sleep! while my wife and my little ones starve,
And moan with the hunger pain?

Clink! clink! And it seems to say,—
"Will another winter drift in overhead,
While you work all night and work all day
To get them clothing and bread?"

Clink! clink! I am falling asleep!
O God, give me strength for a few hours more!
Scrape! scrape! Will I manage to keep
The wolf away from the door?

Clink! clink! Tardy and slow
The rich man's epitaph sinks in the stone.
A widow's tears in the winter's snow
Will easier write my own.

ACTION.

Let me crowd my days with action, let me breathe the
breath of strife,
Let me feel my bosom heaving with the glorious lust of
life.

Not to-night your couch must fold you deep in sleep's
Lethean wave,
Long and still will be your resting in the silence of the
grave.

"Foolish thus to wreck your manhood!" I can hear the
sluggard sigh.
Manhood! 'Tis not such when squandered idly as the
moments fly.

Better be the panting war-steed, in his one exultant neigh,
Than the lifeless raven, croaking through the centuries'
decay.

Who would sleep with fruits of Wisdom dropping ripe upon
the ground?
Who can sleep while storms are raging? while his brother
lieth bound?

Who would sleep when 'tis such pleasure to be arming for
the strife,
And to feel the bosom heaving with the glorious lust of
life?

THE LIVING CHRIST.

Judgment of Pilate,
Jews that revile at
The hanging god-hero, the soul may defy:
Dust to Death's portal,
Truth is immortal,
The good it is deathless, and Christ cannot die.

Jesus is living,
Christ is still living,
Christ is an influence, Christ is a life:—
Love is far better
Than tyrant and fetter;
Peace, it is sweeter than jarring and strife.

EVENING.

Let us wait for the shades of the evening,
When the lights of the Westland pass,
When they steal with their beams o'er the hills and streams
And the blades of the golden grass.

Let us wait for the shades of the evening,
When the song of the birds is low,
As they list to the notes from the secret throats
Of the music fountain's flow.

Let us wait for the shades of the evening,
When the world and its cravings cease,
And the odors arise to the roseate skies
Of the frankincense of peace.

Let us wait for the shades of the evening,
When the visions come down from above
And robe the earth in a raptured birth
With their lingering looks of love.

LOVE.

'Sound me some note in the souls of men
That only the Insoul hears,
Some secret of God and the Universe,
Some chord from the song of the spheres.

Let it teach me a song that will circle the earth
Like a flash of electric flame,
That will tell all things to the minds of men
Of the mysteries whence it came—

A song that will surge on the hearts of men
And Self 'neath its melody smother,
A song that will open the eyes of each
To see by his side a brother—

A song that will exile the murd'rer of Strife
And imprison the monster of Mammon,
That will exorcise the spectre of Fear
And frighten the wolf of Famine—

A song that will silence the pulsing of pain
And soothe the sigh of sorrow,
A song that will bury the wrong of the past
And brighten the mask of the morrow—

A song men shall sing and sing over again,
Entranced with its truth and beauty;
For it maketh desire the motive of life
And a hollow word of duty.'

And the snow-flakes rustled down into the street,
And the passengers shuffled along.
And a voice by my side whispered, 'Love me aright,
And thy life shall be such a song.'

LOVE INVINCIBLE.

They may tear my hand from thy soft, soft hand,
My lip from thy fair, fair cheek,
They may rudely threaten me where I stand,
They may curse me when I speak;
They may bolt and bar, they may guard thee well,
The blood-hound may sleep in thy hall,
But, nor man, nor beast, nor heaven, nor hell,
Can hold true love in thrall.

They may carry thee over the wide, wide sea
To a far and foreign shore;
But my heart, my Love, will follow thee
In spite of the ocean's roar.
Let her pile her peakëd bastions high'r
And whiten her watery wall;
Nor earth, nor sea, nor storm, nor fire,
Can hold true love in thrall.

They may sap thy life with our severed vows,
Or a love thou canst not share—
His wife, the mistress of his house,
The mother of his heir.
They may bury thee deep in that distant clime
With strangers to bear thy pall;
But, nor death, nor life, nor place, nor time
Can hold true love in thrall.

LOVE IMMORTAL.

And can it last—the blissful past ?
  Will the future the tale of the past re-tell ?
For the fates are cruel, and love is the fuel
  With which they keep burning the fire of hell,
    If mortals the evergreen fell.

They will tempt us with cold, the affection withhold,
  Yea, the love which gives warmth to the life ;
And in spite of our care, in the blank of despair,
  They will prompt us to handle the knife,
    With eternal calamity rife.

But the spirit of Love will our trouble remove
  If we wait for his star in the gloom ;
And we'll kill not the tree that was given to be
  Our shelter on down to the tomb,
    But preserve it in vigour and bloom.

DEPARTED DAYS.

The woods are bleak and the skies are blue,
And the birds fly off and their songs are few,
And I'm sitting alone with nothing to do,
    But to think of the days departed,—
To think of the days when the love was new,
To think of the days when I lived for you,
But now they have gone and bade us adieu,
    And left me broken-hearted.

THE WITHERED LEAF IN JUNE.

It cannot be; it is not nearly
  Midsummer yet, my eye deceives:
But, yes, it is; I see it clearly—
  A bit of red among the leaves.

'Tis so with youth: her dearest pleasures
  Her fragrant boughs like green leaves deck;
But yet among the green she treasures,
  With equal care, some withered speck.

A SONG-RAY.

With a rich harvest of the sun
  All the long hill is bright;
The skiey Adirondack domes
  Are dipt in golden light.

How spiritlike the little clouds!
  The sunlight how divine!
The Soul of Beauty is abroad,
  And mingles into mine.

A PLAY.

'Twas Jacques, an old musician, poor, bereaved
Of all those common blessings which impart
Comfort to life, and having but his art
And instrument, to which he fondly cleaved
And o'er it wept and clung when he believed
To lose it, making thus the tear-drops start
To stern men's eyes, and moving more my heart
Than scenes which Shakespeare's mightiest self conceived.

And oft in reverie has been renewed
The touching vision, till I thought it should
Be held by me worthy to be indued
With wreath of song,—what gave me more of good,
Of human sympathy, and fortitude
Of high resolve, than twenty sermons could.

TO NAPOLEON.

All hail, Napoleon! Hail, tremendous name!
Star-fronting ruin in the night of time!
A century hath taunted Thee with crime,
History's page is blackened with thy shame.
A host reviled who never knew the flame
Which Thee consumed, who quenched it in the slime
Of nerveless indolence, though loth to climb,
Whom time, result, or recompense could tame.

But I extol Thee, I will cry thee "hail!"
For thou did'st trust thyself. * * * What lofty meed
Stoops not to resolution's charméd rod?
How little can the powers of earth prevail
When matched with him whose purpose is his creed,
Deeds his sole vows, Desire his only god!

YOUTHFUL GENIUS.

The world is all before him: earth expands
Her splendid harvest fields before his face
And opes her mines of gold. See!—pow'r and place,
Renown and fame have stooped to his commands,
The souls of men are plastic in his hands,
And Love and Beauty covet his embrace.
He leaps into the future; time and space
Have vanished, and a King of earth he stands.

Draw not aside the veil that has been spun
And blazoned by his worth ere life began;
Still let him gaze until his race is run,
Still be the Hero, still the more than man,
Still count the mighty deeds that may be done,
And glory in the godlike thought, 'I CAN.'

FIRST LOVE.

The spell is broke; the youthful fancy's gone;
Life's morning mist hath lifted, and the sun
Shines clearly forth at length. Earth hath begun
To look more real in the truthful dawn.
By broader landscapes, ampler hill and lawn,
Homeward I ride. The early chase is done.
Yet who shall say, tho' seems there nothing won,
What vigorous strength therefrom hath not been drawn?

Our youthful passion is a great forge-fire
Wherein the soul is tempered. Uncontrolled,
The steel is hard and brittle, soon to tire
And shatter into fragments. Faint and cold,
Pliant and soft. But strongly reaching high'r,
A brand of might, fit for its sheath of gold.

SPRING.

'Tis sweet for one in city pent, forlorn,
  And weary with the whirl of human things,
  To view the smokeless sky, the bubbling springs,
The lawn which blooming flowerlets adorn,
And meadow, greening with the shooting corn,
  To breathe the sweet air where the gray-bird sings;
  'Tis like the bliss renewed betrothal brings,
Or trembling joyance of a wedding morn.

'Tis sweet, the early ramble in the wood,
  Or down the road in careless light-eyed rove,
The afternoon in gentle solitude,
  With favorite book within the listening grove,
And Eve!—sweet maid in meditative mood,
  With mystic, twilight looks of speechless love.

COMPENSATION.

I rose, and idly sauntered to the pane,
  And on the March-bleak mountain bent my look;
  And standing there a sad review I took
Of what the day had done me—'What the gain
ToWisdom's treasury?' 'What holds hath Knowledge ta'en?'
  I thought upon the lightly-handled book,
  The erring thought, and felt a stern rebuke:
'Alas! Alas! the day hath been in vain!'

But as I gazed upon the upper blue,
  With many a twining jasper ridge up-ploughed,
Sudden, up-soaring, swung upon my view
  A molten, rolling, sunset-laden cloud:
My spirit stood and caught its glorious hue—
  'Not lost the day!' it, leaping, cried aloud.

OUTREMONT.

Far stretched the landscape, fair, without a flaw,
  Down to one silver sheet, some stream or cloud,
  Through glamorous mists; midway, an engine ploughed
Across the scene with silent-throbbing awe.
I stood and gazed, absorbed in what I saw,
  Till sweet-breathed Evening waked, the pensive-browed,
  And, creeping from the City, spread her shroud
Over the sunlit slopes of Outremont.

Soon the mild Indian Summer will be past,
  November's mists soon flee December's snows;
The trees may perish and the winter's blast
  Wreck the tall windmills; these weak eyes may close;
But ever will that scene continue fast,
  Fixed in my soul where richer still it grows.

HOTEL DIEU.

What an expanse of radiance floods the view,
  From where upon the heaven's rim it foams
  In panting clouds of light, to where the homes
Of wearied housewives claim their little due!
But gaze we where it rests its hallowing hue
  Upon yon sainted cross,—once-sovran Rome's
  Unburied sceptre,—the dun-rusted domes,
And time-emblazoned walls of Hotel Dieu,

Within whose antique cloisters contrite nuns
  In silent sweet tranquility attend
  The injured and diseased,—youth, beauty, shuns
The kiss of lover and the clasp of friend
  For His dear sake. But they too feel this sun's
  Soft splendour; and to them it lights the end.